

PRESS RELEASE

FORMS OF TIME
Tong Yanrunan & Giorgio Morandi
8 June – 2 September 2017

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*The exhibition "Forms of Time: Tong Yanrunan and Giorgio Morandi", opening at **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M.** in Bologna on Thursday 8 June, represents a new and important stage in the project that the chinese artist has been dedicating to the tradition of portrait for 19 years. Already famous in China and present in some of the most important international museums, Tong Yanrunan travels in different countries realizing a maximum number of paintings for each exhibition. The slowness of execution is in fact an integral part of his work, as well as an experience of dialogue between the artist and the subject, turning almost into a performance, in opposition to the numerical titles of the paintings that recall the progressive codes of the pictures taken by a digital camera.*

Born in 1977 in Jiujiang and working in Hangzhou, the artist realizes a series of portraits for each exhibition of some important and significant personalities of that place. These works are painted *face to face*, creating an intense and at the same time estranged relationship – the linguistic differences make the verbal communication impossible – which therefore turns into an abstract, powerful and pictorial act realized in the time of execution.

Tong Yanrunan interprets this opportunity in Bologna such as a homage to Giorgio Morandi, of which some works will be exhibited. Morandi is one of the Modern masters that Tong loves more, feeling the relationship that Morandi had with still lives similar to his own portraits choices on several counts.

As Flaminio Gualdoni writes in the exhibition catalogue: "The artist's principal work lies in delineating the premise of the action, in unravelling ambiguities, conventions, the apparatus of the pretentious that is incrustated in the idea itself of the portrait, turning it into a representative prejudice and an ambiguous *idée reçue*. Tong Yanrunan's expressive tension lingers over the canvas, as the undisputed master, with the ambition (that of a lifetime) of distilling into the painting not a face, but *the face*."

Integrating his practice in a pure Taoist style – there are so many references in his interviews to Zhǎngzǐ – in the portrait's tradition, in its execution, in the laying time, in the line that doesn't use any preparatory drawing but that takes advantage only of brush strokes, we can feel the undisputed presence of that *time* and that *tone* mentioned by Francesco Arcangeli when he talks about Morandi's work.

After studying painting and calligraphy since he was a child with some of the most renowned artists and chinese calligraphers, Tong Yanrunan (1977, Jiujiang – China) completes with success the studies at China Academy of Arts and Center of Art Phenomenology Research CAA, where now he is an associate professor. Among the numerous exhibitions, we can mention the group exhibitions at the Grand Palais in Paris, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, at the National Museum of China in Beijing; whereas, among the solo exhibitions, we can remind those at the Bonn Contemporary Museum and at the Osage Gallery of Singapore. His works are in some of the most important private and public collections, such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, the National Art Museum of China and the China Arts Museum. Among the critics that have written about him, worth mentioning is Fan Di'an (vice president at the Academy of Fine Arts, director of China Arts Museum, curator of the Chinese National Pavilion at the 50th & 51th Venice Biennial).